

STATE SENATOR • MARK SCHAUER • 19TH DISTRICT

Schauer Press Release



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Schauer Hosts Town Hall Meeting on Long Term Care **More choices, adequate funding top priorities for Senate Democrats**

LANSING — Proactively addressing one of Michigan's most pressing policy issues, Senator Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek) hosted a long term care town hall meeting today at the Lifeways Center in Jackson. Sen. Schauer discussed with seniors and aging experts ways to offer more flexibility in care.

Estimates show that by 2010 the number of Michigan residents who will need long-term care will outpace the number of available direct-care providers. By 2020, 1 in 6 Michigan citizens will be over 65 years old.

"It is a disservice to our seniors to continue to allow inferior standards in the long term care industry. They have built our country into what it is today and deserve the best we have to offer," said Schauer. "Long term care reform is an urgent matter."

The Long Term Care Task force identified a number of recommendations to improve the system:

- Fully Fund MI-Choice Program: MI-Choice waivers are the mechanism by which Medicaid long-term care recipients obtain funding for in-home and community-based care. Currently, adequate funding has not been provided by the state to allow all interested seniors to participate. On average, caring for someone requiring daily monitoring costs \$43 per day if that person lives in their own home. It costs Medicaid \$140 per day – more than three times as much - to care for that same person in a nursing home or other institutionalized facility.
- Single Point of Access: Currently, consumers must piece together from many different agencies, a package that will serve their own specific needs. The Task Force recommends creating a system in which consumers can access all of the necessary services from one centralized point.
- Improve Long Term Care Worker Conditions: Caregivers in the long term care industry are often severely underpaid and often work without access to healthcare themselves.

"Long term care workers are entrusted with caring for our parents and our grandparents, and they could eventually care for each of us," said Schauer. "Yet these workers often work for poverty-level wages under extremely difficult conditions. Our loved ones and those who care for them deserve better."

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Mark Schauer is the Senate Democratic Floor Leader. He represents the 19th Senate District, which includes all of Calhoun County and most of Jackson County.